

Christina Prior
276 Middletown Rd
Colchester, CT 06415
860-537-4867
stina_1123@hotmail.com

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT QUALITY HOME CARE WORKFORCE COUNCIL
RAISED BILL NO. 6668
MARCH 17, 2009

My name is Christina Prior and I am a Personal Care Assistant. I am submitting this testimony to state my opposition to Raised Bill No. 6668. Most specifically, I am strongly opposed to Section 2, which outlines the creation of the Personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council.

I have been employed as a PCA for just over a year now. I was hired and trained personally by my employer in a system that has been working extremely well for her and others for the last several decades. My employer has been hiring and training her own staff for the seventeen years she's lived on her own. The ability of employers to manage their own PCAs is one of the things that makes the community-based waivers so successful. Each person on the waivers is different, with different needs and requirements, different strengths and weaknesses. It would be impossible for an outside entity, namely the Council, to do as thorough and site-specific a job of training PCAs as these capable people do themselves. Certainly a politically appointed group of people cannot know better the needs of individual employers than those individuals themselves?

It has been my experience, both personally and through interaction with other PCAs, that there is a deep respect and loyalty between employer and assistant. Due to the nature of the job, it is a close relationship. It takes time and trust to build that kind of bond, and once built it is not easily broken. This is something that is needed for the success of independent community living. One of the roles of the proposed Council is to provide backup and respite PCAs. If your day was already starting out so terrible that the person who was supposed to get you out of bed doesn't show up, and someone else was coming at the last minute, would you prefer someone that was picked by a council of people you don't know? Or would you prefer someone you interviewed, hired and trained yourself? It seems like an easy question to me. Why have all that extra stress and worry in an already far from perfect situation.

Another troubling part of Raised Bill 6668 is the list of PCAs that the council will apparently keep, to be given to anyone deemed appropriate by the council, potentially a union since the strongest supporter of this that I've seen is SEIU 1199. I think this is a horrible concept and should NEVER be implemented. I have no desire to have my personal information on a list just because I happen to work a certain job. I have heard the same from several other PCAs as well.

I hope that you will take these concerns as well as the concerns of so many others into account when deciding on this bill. So please, vote NO to Raised Bill 6668. It will only centralize and de-personalize the PCA profession, which would be a great loss to both employers and employees.

Thank you for your time.